

THE ⁴
LAST SPEECH,

AND
DYING TESTIMONY,

OF THAT BLOOM OF THE CHURCH

THE REVEREND

Mr. James Guthrie,

Minister of the Gospel at *Stirling*:

At his Death in Edlnburgh, June
1. 1661; which he Wrote, a
day or two before his Death, and
left with some of his Friends,
sealed and attested under his
own Hand.



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The LAST SPEECH of
Mr. JAMES GUTHRIE.

MEN and brethren, I fear many of you be come hither to gaze, rather than to be edified by the carriage and last words of a dying man: But if any have an ear to hear, as I hope some of this great confluence have, I desire your audience to a few words, I am come hither to lay down this earthly tabernacle and mortal flesh of mine: and I bless God, through his grace I do it willingly and not by constraint. I say I suffer willingly; if I had not been so minded, I might have made a diversion and not been a prisoner; but being conscious to myself of nothing worthy of death or of bonds, I would not stain my innocency with the suspicion of guiltiness by my withdrawing; neither have I wanted opportunities and advantages to escape since I was prisoner, not by the fault of my keeper (God knoweth) but otherwise: But neither for this had I light or liberty, lest I should reflect upon the Lord's name, and offend the generation of the righteous. And if some men have not been mistaken, or dealt deceitfully in telling me so, I might have avoided not only the severity of the sentence, but also had much favour and countenance, by complying with the courses of the time: But I durst not redeem my life with the loss of my integrity; God knoweth I durst not: and that since I was prisoner, he hath so bolden me by the hand, that he never suffered me to bring it in debate in my inward thought; I did judge it better to suffer than to sin. And therefore am I come hither to lay down my life this day: and I bless God I die not as a fool: not that I have any thing wherein to glory of myself. I acknowledge that I am a sinner, yea one of the greatest and vilest that has owned a profession of religion, and one of the most unworthy that ever preached the gospel; and therefore righteousness have I none, all is vile. But I do believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners whereof I am the chief. Through faith in his righteousness and blood have I obtained mercy, and through him, and him alone, have I



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the hope of a blessed conquest and victory over sin, and Satan, and hell, and death, and that I shall attain unto the resurrection of the just, and be made partaker of eternal life. I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. I have preached salvation through his name; and as I have preached so do I believe, and do commend the riches of his free grace and faith in his name unto you all, as the only way whereby ye can be saved.

And as I bless the Lord that I die not as a fool; so also that I die not for evil doing. Not a few of you may happily judge that I suffer as a thief, or as a murderer, or as an evil doer, or as a busy-body in other mens matters. It was the lot of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and hath been of many of his faithful followers and people to suffer by the world as evil doers; and as my soul feareth not at it, but desireth to rejoice in being brought into conformity with my blessed Head and so blessed a company in this thing; so do I desire and pray, that I may be to none of you to-day, upon this account, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. Blessed is he that shall not be offended at Jesus Christ and his poor servants and members, because of their being condemned as evil doers by the world. God is my record, that in these things, for which sentence of death hath passed against me, I have a good conscience. I bless God, they are not matters of compliance with sectaries, or designs or practices against his Majesty's person or government, or the person or government of his royal father. My heart, I bless God, is conscious unto no disloyalty; nay, loyal I have been, and I commend it unto you to be loyal and obedient to the Lord. True piety is the foundation of true loyalty. A wicked man may be a flatterer and a time-server, but he will never be a loyal subject. But to return to my purpose, the matters for which I am condemned are matters belonging to my calling and function as a minister of the gospel; such as the discovery and reproof of sin; the pressing and the holding fast of the oath of God in the covenant, and preserving and carrying on of the religion and reformation according thereto; and denying to acknowledge the civil magistrate as the proper competent judge in causes ecclesiastical. That in all these things which (God so ordering by his gracious providence) are the grounds of my indictment and death, I have a good conscience, as having walked therein according to the light and rule

of God's word, and so did become a minister of the gospel.

I do also bless the Lord, that I do not die as one not desired. I know that by not a few I neither have been nor am desired. It hath been my lot to have been a man of contention and sorrow; but it is my comfort that for my own things I have not contended, but for the things of Jesus Christ, for what relateth to His interest and work, and the well-being of his people. In order to the preserving and promoting of these, I did protest against, and stood in opposition unto these late Assemblies at St Andrews, Dundee, and Edinburgh, and the public resolutions for bringing the malignant party in the judicatories and armies of this kingdom, conceiving the same contrary to the word of God, and to our solemn covenant and engagements, and to be an inlet to defection, and to the ruine and destruction of the work of God. And it is now manifest to many consciences that I have not been therein deceived, nor was I fighting against a man of straw. I was also desirous, and did use some poor endeavours to have the church of God purged of insufficient and scandalous and corrupt ministers and elders. For these things I have been mistaken by some, and hated by others: But I bless the Lord as I had the testimony of my own conscience, so I was also therein approven in the consciences of many of the Lord's precious servants and people; and how little soever I may be desired by some, yet by these I know I do die desired; and their approbation, and prayers and affection is of more value with me than the contradiction or reproach, or hatred of many others; the love of the one I cannot recompence, and the mistake or hatred, or reproach of the other, I do with all my heart forgive; and wherein I have offended any of them do beg their mercy and forgiveness. I do from my soul wish that my death may be profitable unto both, that the one may be confirmed and established in the straight ways of the Lord, and that the other (if the Lord so will) may be convinced, and cease from these things that are not good, and do not edify but destroy.

One thing I would warn you all of, That God is wroth yea, very wroth with Scotland, and threatens to depart and remove his candlestick. The causes of his wrath are many and would to God it were not one great cause that causes his wrath are despised and rejected of men. Consider the call that is recorded, Jerem. 36. and the consequence of it, and tremble and fear. I cannot but also say, that there is a great

addition and increase of wrath. 1. By that deluge of prophanity that overfloweth the whole land, and hath reined loose so far, that many have lost not only all use and exercise of religion, but even of morality, and that common civility that is to be found amongst the heathens. 2. By that horrible treachery and perjury that is in the matter of the covenant and cause of God, and work of reformation: 'Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord, for my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Shall he break the covenant and prosper? Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with God, which frameth mischief into a law.' I fear the Lord be about to bring a sword on these lands, which shall avenge the quarrel of his covenant. 3. Horrible ingratitude: The Lord after ten years oppression and bondage hath broken the yoke of strangers from off our necks; but what do we render unto him for his goodness, most of the fruit of our delivery is to work wickedness and to strengthen ourselves to do evil. — 4. A most dreadful idolatry, and sacrificing to the creature: We have changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into the image of a corruptible man, in whom many have placed all their salvation and desire, and have turned that which might have been a blessing unto us (being kept in a due line of subordination under God) into an idol of jealousy, by preferring it before him. God is also wroth with a generation of carnal, corrupt, and time-serving ministers. I know and bear testimony that in the church of Scotland there is a true and faithful ministry: blessed be God, we have yet many to study their duty, and desire to be found faithful to their Lord and Master; and I pray you to honour and reverence, and esteem much of these for their works sake. And I pray them to be encouraged in their Lord and Master, who is with them to make them as iron pillars, and brazen walls, and as a strong defended city in the faithful following of their duty. But oh! that there were not many who mind earthly things, and are enemies to the cross of Jesus Christ, who push with the side and shoulder, who strengthen the hands of evil doers, who make themselves transgressors, by studying to build again what they did warrantably destroy, I mean Prelacy, and the ceremonies, and the service-book, a mystery of iniquity that works amongst us, whose steps lead unto the house of the

great whore Babylon, the mother of fornications. Or, who-
 soever else he be that buildeth this Jericho again, let him take
 heed of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite, and of that flying
 roll threatned, Zech. v. And let all ministers take heed that
 they watch and be stedfast and faithful, and quit themselves
 like men, and be strong, and give faithful and seasonable
 warning concerning sin and duty. Many of the Lord's peo-
 ple do sadly complain of the fainting and silence of many
 watchmen; and it concerneth them to consider what God
 calleth for at their hands in such a day. Silence now in a
 watchman, when he is so much called to speak, and give his
 testimony upon the peril of his life, is doubtless a great sin.
 The Lord open the mouths of his servants to speak his word
 with all boldness, that covenant-breaking may be discovered
 and reprov'd, and that the kingdom of Jesus Christ may not
 be supplanted, nor the souls of his people destroyed without
 a witness.

I have but a few words more to add: All that are prophane
 amongst you, I exhort them to repentance; for the day of
 the Lord's vengeance hastneth and is near: But there is yet a
 door of mercy open for you, if you will not despise the day
 of salvation. All that are maligners, reproachers, and per-
 secutors of godliness, and of such as live godly, take heed
 what you do; it will be hard for you to kick against the pricks;
 you make yourselves the butt of the Lord's fury, and of his
 flaming imagiation, if you do not cease from and repent of
 all your ungodly deeds. All that are neutral, and indifferent,
 and lukewarm professors, be zealous and repent, lest the Lord
 spew you out of his mouth.

You that lament after the Lord, and lament for all the a-
 bominations that are done in this city, and in the land, and
 take pleasure in the stones and dust of Zion, cast not away
 your confidence, but be comforted and encouraged in the
 Lord; he will yet appear to your joy. God hath not cast
 away his people or work in Britain and Ireland; I hope it
 shall once more revive by the power of his Spirit, and take
 root downward, and bear fruit upward. There is yet a holy
 seed and precious remnant, whom God will preserve and
 bring forth: but how long or dark our night may be I do not
 know; the Lord shorten it for the sake of his chosen. In the
 mean while, be ye patient and stedfast, immoveable, always
 abounding in the work of the Lord, and in love one to ano-
 ther. Beware of snares which are straw'd thick. Clave co

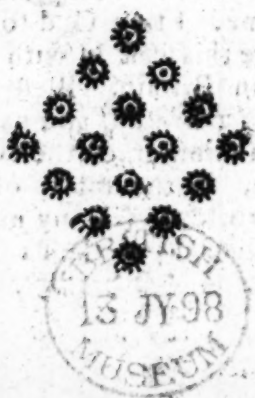
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the covenant and work of reformation. Do not defile the
 cross of Jesus Christ; choose rather to suffer affliction with the
 people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;
 and to account the reproach of Christ greater riches than all
 the treasure of the world. Let my death grieve none of you,
 it will be more profitable and advantageous both for me and
 for you, and for the church of God, and for Christ's honour,
 than my life could have been. I forgive all men the guilt of
 sin, and I desire you to do so also. Pray for them that perse-
 cute you, and bless them that curse you; bless, I say, and
 curse not. I die in the faith of the apostles and primitive
 Christians, and protestant reformed churches particularly of
 the church of Scotland, whereof I am a member and mini-
 ster. I bear my witness and testimony to the doctrine, wor-
 ship, discipline, and government of the church of Scotland,
 by kirk-sessions, presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies.
 Popery and prelacy, and all the trumphetry of service and ce-
 remonies that wait upon them, I do abhor. I do bear my
 witness unto the National Covenant of Scotland, and Solemn
 League and Covenant betwixt the three kingdoms of Scot-
 land, England, and Ireland. The sacred, solemn, public
 oaths of God, I believe can be loosed or dispensed with by
 no person, or party, or power upon earth; but are still bind-
 ing upon these kingdoms, and will be for ever hereafter; and
 are ratified and sealed by the conversion of many thousand
 souls, since our entering thereinto. I bear my witness to the
 protestations against the controverted assemblies and the pub-
 lic resolutions; to the testimonies given against the sectaries; a-
 gainst the course of backsliding and defection, that is now on
 foot in the land, and all the branches or parts thereof, under
 whatsoever name or notion, or acted by whatsoever name or
 person. And in the last place, I bear my witness to the cross
 of Jesus Christ, and that I never had cause, nor have cause
 this day, to repent because of any thing I have suffered, or
 can suffer for his name. I take God to record upon my soul,
 I would not exchange this scaffold with the mitre or palace of
 the greatest prelate in Britain. Blessed be God, who hath
 shewed mercy to such a wretch, and hath revealed his Son in
 me, and made me a minister of the everlasting gospel; and
 that he hath deigned, in the midst of much contradiction
 from satan and the world, to seal my ministry upon not a few
 of his people, and especially in the station wherein I was last,
 mean the congregation and presbytery of Stirling. God

forgive the poor empty man that did there intrude upon my labours, and hath made a prey upon many poor souls, and exposed others to reproach and oppression, and a famine of the word of the Lord. God forgive the misleaders of that part of the poor people, who tempted them to reject their own pastor, and to admit of intruders; and the Father of mercies pity that poor misled people; and the Lord visit the congregation and presbytery of Stirling once more with faithful pastors; and grant that the work and people of God may be revived thorow all Britain, and over all the world. Jesus Christ is my light and my life, my righteousness, my strength and my salvation: He is all my salvation, and all my desire. Him, O him, I do with all the strength of my soul commend unto you. Blessed are they that are not offended in him. Blessed are they that trust in him. Bless him, O my soul from henceforth, even forever. Rejoice, rejoice all ye that love him. Be patient and rejoice in tribulation. Blessed are you, and blessed shall you be forever and ever. Everlasting righteousness and eternal salvation is yours; All are yours and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour thou bearest to thy people; O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen; that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance. Now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

JAMES GUTHRIE.

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